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# [Review of] Organizational Storytelling for Librarians

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***Organizational Storytelling for Librarians: Using Stories for Effective Leadership.*** Kate Marek. Chicago: ALA, 2011. 120 p. Paper \$50 (ISBN 978-0-8389-1079-5).

Everyone loves a good story. From childhood onward, we are surrounded by and gradually internalize all sorts of stories: fairy tales, family anecdotes, novels, movies, news articles, and so on. As adults, we develop our own narratives to explain the world around us. Those who work in libraries and information centers are uniquely placed to see the power of stories on a daily basis. Until now, storytelling as a professional practice in libraries has largely been limited to children's story hours and book clubs. However, in *Organizational Storytelling for Librarians: Using Stories for Effective Leadership*, library educator, trainer, and consultant Kate Marek demonstrates that the act of storytelling is not just for the children's department anymore.

Organizational storytelling, although first making its appearance in the business world in the early 1990s, has recently emerged as a popular management technique in works such as Stephen Denning's *The Springboard: How Storytelling Ignites Action in Knowledge-Era Organizations* (Butterworth Heinemann, 2000) and Terrence L. Gargiulo's *Stories at Work: Using Stories to Improve Communication and Build Relationships* (Praeger, 2006). Marek is among the first to apply this recent business trend to library management and leadership. As she ably illustrates, storytelling and libraries are a natural fit. Just as cultural and educational norms are transmitted from generation to generation through storytelling, so too can an organization transmit its own meaning among its workers and its customers through the power of narrative.

Stories in the organizational context do not have to be as short as an "elevator pitch," nor do they need to be too personal. Marek offers general techniques on how to develop storytelling skills, as well as useful examples of how stories can build community, communicate an institution's vision and values, and help manage change. Especially interesting is a chapter expanding on the "library as place" idea, describing how a library building's architecture tells its own story of the institution's history, meaning, and goals.

Well-researched and thoughtfully presented with a wealth of useful tips and examples, *Organizational Storytelling for Librarians* belongs on every library manager's bookshelf. —Jennifer A. Bartlett, Head of Reference Services, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky